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SERMONS ON THE CHURCH.

**" Church authority is one of those unhappy subjects which is seldom seen
but from one of its extremes. In some places, and with some persons,
it can do everything : in others, it can do nothing."**

BISHOP SHERLOCK, *Disc.* Vol. IV. p. 315.

R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

THREE
SERMONS
ON
THE CHURCH,

PREACHED IN
THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. JAMES, WESTMINSTER,
DURING LENT, MDCCCXLII.

BY
CHARLES JAMES LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

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S E R M O N I.

ACTS II. 47.

THE LORD ADDED TO THE CHURCH DAILY SUCH AS SHOULD BE
SAVED.

SALVATION through Jesus Christ was the doctrine which the Apostles were commissioned to proclaim to all the people of the earth: *Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.* Those who were so baptized, were made members of the Church of Christ, and placed in a state capable of salvation. It was God's purpose to save them through Christ, and this was the first step in the process. The sacred historian therefore says, *The Lord added to the Church daily such*

as should be saved. It did not follow as a certain consequence, that all who were so added to the visible body of Christ would be finally saved by Him from the wrath to come; but it would be their own fault if they were not; for by their incorporation into the Church they were enabled to do that, which, without such incorporation, would have been impracticable, to work out their own salvation, though with fear and trembling.¹

That all men stand in need of a Saviour, is a truth which lies at the very foundation of Christianity. It was the extremity of that need, and the impossibility of its being met by man himself, which justified, humanly speaking, all the apparatus of a preliminary dispensation of types, and prophecies, and wonderful providences, and the interruption of the constituted order of nature by miracles and signs. It was a case, the bearings of which upon God's moral government of the universe, and upon the fate

¹ "We find the converts, who, upon repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus Christ, were baptized, often spoken of in the New Testament as persons already saved; rescued from that state of condemnation to eternal death in which they had been before baptism. St. Paul in Eph. ii. 8, says, *By grace ye are saved.* And in Titus iii. 5, *According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration.* (See also 1 Cor. i. 18; xv. 2.)"—Bishop Pearce on Acts ii. 47.

of mankind, can never be known to us, except so far as they are revealed to us by God himself; and as it was a case, in which man of himself could do nothing to accomplish his own moral restitution, and to undo the evil that had been done, every thing depended upon the sole will and pleasure of Almighty God, who was free to choose his own method of achieving a work, which none but himself could achieve at all. As far as we are able to judge, from what we know, or think we know, of the divine attributes, He might, had it so pleased Him, have freely forgiven the sins of mankind, without the intervention of any mediator, or the requiring of any propitiation; or He might have *preserved* them, as He *made* them at the first, holy and without sin. We can see many good reasons for his *not* having done so; but undoubtedly He *might* have so ordained, had it seemed good to Him. But the whole plan of redemption was his own; determined upon in the divine counsels before the foundation of the world, by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as well in its methods and instruments, as in the putting forth of the divine attributes of justice and mercy, and their combination in the great mystery of godliness, the death of the Incar-

nate Son of God upon the cross: *Of his own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures;*² and of his own will did He appoint the methods by which those first-fruits, and the more abundant harvest which followed, were to be gathered into his garners; the workmen and the implements, Apostles, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers; his Word, his Church, and his Sacraments.

Of that agency, which God is pleased to employ in the fulfilment of his purposes of mercy, no part nor feature, which is of his own appointment, nor any which follows by necessary inference therefrom, can be safely or innocently neglected. Those persons, who acknowledge the duty of bringing all men to a knowledge of salvation, and would take the work in hand, must be content to do so by certain rules and measures, and to walk along the straight lines of God's precepts and ordinances; and it has been for want of attention to this principle, that heresies and schisms have so fearfully rent the seamless mantle of Christ's truth and love, and so little progress has been made in evangelizing the world; some undervaluing and neglecting

² James i. 18.

the blessed Word itself; some the ministry of that Word; some the Sacraments of grace; and others the Church itself; as though the Divine Author of our religion was not the best judge of the means by which that religion was to be diffused over the earth, and made available to its ends, *glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace.*

It is an unavoidable inference from the words of the text, that those, who *are to be saved*, must be *added to the Church*: in other words, that incorporation into the Church of Christ is necessary to salvation. It becomes, therefore, a question of most serious import to us all, What is the Church? Upon which follows another of not inferior moment, Who can be properly said to have been *added to the Church*? May the Great Head of the Church, who has promised to it his enlightening Spirit, guide us to a right conclusion in this important matter! And we may be sure that He *will* do so, if we take the inquiry in hand with a humble, teachable mind, and with that spirit of charity which *rejoiceth in the truth*, and yet *thinketh no evil of others*.

I need not tell you that the word *Church* is used in the writings of the New Testament in a

variety of senses, all bearing a close relation to one another, yet with differences which materially affect the meaning of the passages where it occurs, and which render it needful for us to be cautious in drawing general conclusions therefrom. The English word *Church*, or *Kirk*, is derived from the Greek,³ and signifies properly *that which belongs to the Lord, the house of the Lord*; and thence, the people assembled in the house of the Lord, the congregation of believers.⁴ But the word used by the writers of the New Testament,⁵ means literally an assembly of persons, called forth from the rest, and met together. It is used in the 19th chapter of the Acts, of the public assembly of the Ephesians: but as applied to Christians, it denotes a company of persons believing in Jesus Christ; sometimes the whole body of the faithful in all parts of the world, sometimes those who inhabit a particular country or city. Thus we read of the Church of God, the Churches of the Gentiles, the Churches of the Saints, the Churches of Judæa, Samaria, Galilee, Syria and Cilicia, the Church of Jerusalem,

³ κυριακή.

⁴ Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Art. IX. Bishop Beveridge on Art. XIX.

⁵ ἐκκλησία.

Antioch, and Ephesus; and of the Church which was in the house of Nymphas, and in that of Philemon: but in these last-mentioned instances it is clear that we must understand the phrase as denoting, not distinct and independent Churches in the houses of Nymphas and Philemon, but only those members of the Church who were also members of those families.

In the sentence, which I have chosen for my text, it is manifest that the word Church is to be taken in the largest sense, as denoting the general assembly of the faithful, called out of an unbelieving world, and forming one mystical body, members one of another, Jesus Christ himself being the Head. *For as the body*, says St. Paul to the Corinthians, *is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*⁶ This united society of believers constitutes the household of God, a distinct family, and a peculiar commonwealth; as St. Paul describes the Ephesian Christians:

⁶ 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, 27.

*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together, for an habitation of God, through the Spirit.*⁷ To this mystical body each individual sinner, who is *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*,⁸ is added; united thereto by baptism; which, says St. Peter, *doth also now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*.⁹ A new principle of life is infused into him; he is regenerate; born anew of water and of the Spirit; and placed in a new relation to God, as one of his own peculiar family and household; furnished with all the means of realizing to himself the promise of salvation given by Jesus Christ to all penitent sinners, and sealed to *him* personally in baptism, which, as our own Church teaches, “is not only

⁷ Eph. ii, 19—22. See Barrow on the Unity of the Church, p. 760, folio.

⁸ 1 Pet. i. 2.

⁹ 1 Pet. iii. 21.

“ a sign of profession, and mark of difference,
 “ whereby Christian men are discerned from
 “ others that be not christened; but it is also a
 “ sign of regeneration, or new birth, whereby,
 “ as by an instrument, they that receive baptism
 “ rightly are grafted into the body of the
 “ Church: the promises of forgiveness of sin,
 “ and of our adoption to be the sons of God by
 “ the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed;
 “ faith is confirmed, and grace increased, by
 “ virtue of prayer to God.”¹⁰

How little are these solemn and important
 ends of holy baptism considered and laid to
 heart by Christian parents who bring their chil-
 dren to the font! How few are there, who
 seriously reflect, that in so doing they are
adding to the Church those who are to be saved;
 and that it mainly depends upon their own
 prayers, and instruction, and example, whether
 the tender branches, so grafted into the true
 vine, shall be fed with the sap of holy doctrine
 and principle, and grow up to be *trees of right-*
*eousness, the planting of the Lord,*¹¹ fit to be
 transferred, in due season, to the paradise of
 God; or whether they shall be like the branches
 of which our Saviour speaks, which, because

¹⁰ Art. XXVII.

¹¹ Isaiah lxi. 3.

they abide not in Him, *are withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned!*¹²

But I revert to the conclusion to be drawn from the words of the text, that if *the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved*, those who are to be saved must be added to the Church;¹³ and that therefore the Church is the appointed medium, or instrumental means, in and through which individual sinners must appropriate to themselves the pardon which Christ has purchased for all; first being admitted by baptism into the Church, and so acquiring a title to its privileges, and grace to use them; and afterwards being nourished with the food of sound doctrine, and of the Sacrament of the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who was given, as our Church declares, “not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that Holy Sacrament.” This being the case, it is manifestly a question of very great importance to every one of us, to ascertain whether he be really a member of the Church; and in order to determine this it is

¹² John xv. 6.

¹³ In whatever way the word *σωζομένους* is to be rendered, this inference will follow.

necessary that we should know what that Church is, of which the sacred historian speaks, and of which our Lord himself had declared, that He would found it upon a rock, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it: for it is manifest from this expression, as well as from those which have been already cited from the writings of the Apostles, that the Church is one distinct and compact body; and since those who are to be saved must be added thereto, there cannot surely be wanting some distinguishing marks, wherein those, who seek for refuge in that ark of safety,¹⁴ may recognise the impress of its divine origin and authority.

Now that our Blessed Lord did not himself *build* his Church, but only laid its deep and immovable foundations, is an indisputable truth. He gave to his Apostles the commission of master-builders, but did not qualify them for the execution of their task, till he fulfilled his promise of sending to them the Comforter. The work of building the Church of Christ commenced upon the day of Pentecost. Neither did He give them precise directions as to the

¹⁴ "Arca Noë—sacramentum ecclesiæ Christi, quæ tunc, omnibus foris pereuntibus, eos solos servavit qui intra arcam fuerunt." Firmilianus, Ep. ad S. Cyprian. Routh, Opusc. p. 232.

outward form which the spiritual building was to assume; for the guidance of the same Holy Spirit would be sufficient to instruct them in that, as in every other part of their duty: and we are to inquire in what manner they fulfilled it; and how far their example and authority, in the constitution of the visible Church, is binding upon the whole body of which Jesus Christ himself is the Head. We shall be greatly assisted in this inquiry, if we can ascertain in what light the Church was considered by those, who lived much nearer than ourselves to the time of its first foundation, and were themselves amongst the most conspicuous of the lights set upon that candlestick of gold to give light to the world. The following clear and compendious account of it is given by Tertullian, who wrote before the end of the second century, and who could hardly have been deceived as to the history of the Church's constitution, into whatever errors he might fall as to points of doctrine or discipline. "Christ," he says, "during his residence on earth, declared the purposes of his mission, and the rule of faith and practice, either publicly to the people, or privately to the disciples, of whom he attached twelve more immediately to his person, intending that

“ they should be the teachers of the Gentiles.
 “ One of them betrayed him : but the remaining
 “ eleven he commanded to go and instruct all
 “ nations, and baptize them in the name of the
 “ Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These eleven,
 “ having added to their number a twelfth, in
 “ the room of him who had been cut off; and
 “ having received the promised effusion of the
 “ Holy Spirit, by which they were endued with
 “ supernatural powers, first preached the Gospel
 “ and founded Churches in Judæa : they then
 “ went forth to the Gentiles, preaching in like
 “ manner, and founding Churches in every city.
 “ From these Churches others were propagated,
 “ and continue to be propagated at the present
 “ day, which are reckoned in the number of
 “ apostolic Churches, inasmuch as they are the
 “ offspring of apostolic Churches. Moreover
 “ all these Churches constitute *one* Church :
 “ being joined together in the unity of the faith,
 “ and in the bond of peace.”

Such is the language of that early Father, who
 in arguing upon points of doctrine, or of disci-
 pline, “ never fails to appeal to the belief or prac-
 “ tice of those Churches which had been actually
 “ founded by the Apostles; on the ground, that in
 “ *them* the faith taught and the institutions esta-

“ blished by the Apostles were still preserved.”¹⁵
 To the same effect Clemens of Alexandria, who was nearly contemporary with Tertullian, describes the Church as “the Congregation of the
 “ Elect—the image of the Church in heaven—
 “ collecting men through one Lord into the unity
 “ of one faith—in which ancient Church alone
 “ is the true knowledge to be found, because
 “ in it is preserved the apostolic right division
 “ of doctrine.”¹⁶ Hence then we infer, that all Churches, derived from other Churches of apostolic foundation, holding the same faith, and preserving the same ordinances, are parts of that general and universal Church, in which we profess our belief in the words of the Creed, “I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church.”

Now let us see how this agrees with the definition of the Church given in our 19th Article.
 “ The visible Church of Christ is a congregation
 “ of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of
 “ God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly
 “ ministered according to Christ’s ordinance, in
 “ all those things that of necessity are requisite

¹⁵ The Bishop of Lincoln’s Ecclesiastical History illustrated from the writings of Tertullian, p. 229.

¹⁶ The Bishop of Lincoln’s Account of the Writings of Clement of Alexandria, p. 461.

“to the same,”¹⁷ where I conceive is intended, not any particular congregation of believers, but the whole body of the faithful in all parts of the world, as it is explained in the 55th of our Canons, “Christ’s Holy Catholic Church, that “is, the whole congregation of Christian people “dispersed throughout the world.”¹⁸ In this Church the pure Word of God is preached: consequently there must be unity of doctrine in all points of faith necessary to salvation; and the Sacraments are duly ministered according to Christ’s ordinance, in all things requisite to the essence and efficacy of a Sacrament. This definition is of a very general kind, as to every thing but the purity of the Word preached, and the observance of all things essential to the due administration of the Sacraments, leaving it still open to inquiry what those things are.

From the view, which we have now taken of the subject, the following conclusions may seem to be established; First, that the Church is a spiritual society, the foundations of which were laid by Jesus Christ himself, its divine and perpetual Head; its frame and constitution being afterwards constructed and settled by his Apostles,

¹⁷ Art. XIX.

¹⁸ See Bp. Beveridge on Art. XIX.

acting with his authority, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Secondly, that its office is, to bring sinners to Christ, by furnishing to those who are incorporated into it the means of knowledge and holiness ; and that it is therefore not merely *instrumental* as a teacher, but *sacramental* as a medium of the believer's personal union with his Saviour, conveying and dispensing grace. Thirdly, that it consists of all those who, having been admitted into it by baptism, hold the faith as it is in Jesus, and who use, or do not obstinately refuse, their spiritual privileges ; and that all local Churches, which can trace their apostolical descent, and teach the pure Word, and duly administer the ordinances of Christ, are branches, more or less flourishing, more or less profitable, of the one Holy Universal Church.

These are very important truths, in which every one of *us* is personally concerned. They are not new ; nor have they now been enforced with any new demonstration or argument. But we fear that by many they have never been seriously thought upon, with reference to their own personal interest in them, nor followed out into all their practical results. I commend them to your serious consideration, as baptized mem-

bers of a Church, which professes to be, and we believe *is*, a true, and fruitful, if not a perfectly pure and faultless branch of the Church Catholic ; a Church, which is provided with all the means of faith and holiness for the use of its members, who are therefore all the more sinful if they use them not. I propose, with the divine blessing, to pursue the subject on Sunday next, and to consider the important question, What form of government was appointed for the Church by our Lord or his Apostles ; and how far such appointment is to be held of perpetual and unchangeable obligation upon every portion of that Church. In the meantime, I would remind you of a truth, which by a very large proportion of Christians is forgotten, or practically neglected, that the Church consists not merely of the Clergy, but of the whole body of baptized believers : and that every member of that spiritual household has his appropriate duties to perform in that capacity, as well as those who are set over the rest *to give them meat in due season* :¹⁹ that all are concerned in the Church's purity and efficiency, and bound to promote it as they have opportunity ; and that if it be the Church's duty to provide the food of God's Word and

¹⁹ Matt. xxiv. 45.

Sacraments, and all those ordinances which are requisite to the dispensation of truth and grace ; and if it be the duty of her ministers to dispense them accordingly ; it is in the same degree obligatory upon her other members, to profit to the utmost by that provision ; and not to neglect, or despise any of those appointments, by which she realizes her sacramental character.

Lastly I would observe, that the holiness of the Church Catholic is not to be measured by that of any particular branch of it ; still less by the holiness of any one or more of its members. The wisdom and goodness of God, in the providential arrangements which He is pleased to make for the benefit of his fallen creatures, may be thwarted or impeded for a time, and in particular instances, by their perverseness or folly ; but the arrangements themselves are not on that account the less wise or good. “ In the visible Church,” says our 26th Article, “ the evil be ever mingled with the good, “ and sometimes the evil have chief authority “ in the ministration of the Word and Sacra- “ ments.”—But “ the effect of Christ’s ordinance “ is not taken away by their wickedness, nor “ the grace of God diminished from such, as “ by faith and rightly do receive the Sacraments

“ministered unto them.” And how merciful is this provision with respect to the evil, while it is not injurious to the good! for as long as wicked men are externally in the Church, they are within hearing of the Church’s warnings, and invitations, within reach of the Spirit’s teaching and influences; the means of conversion are accessible to them; and though “they have departed from grace and fallen into sin, yet by grace they may arise again and amend their lives;”²⁰—and therefore it is only the obstinately wicked, and contumaciously impenitent, who are to be shut out from the visible Church upon earth; and even with respect to *them*, fearful as their condition is, we dare not anticipate the final sentence of the eternal Judge, who will send forth his angels to separate the tares from the wheat: *Let both grow together unto the harvest.* But let us not forget the dangerous state, in which those persons must of necessity be, who, having been added to the Church, as sinners to be saved, live as though nothing further were to be done to secure their salvation. They are not members of Christ’s mystical body for nothing. Their spiritual state, if it be not *better*, in consequence of

²⁰ Art. XVI.

their baptism, must be *worse* : all the privileges and immunities of Church membership are to those, who diligently use them, *a savour of life unto life* ; but to the profane and careless, *a savour of death unto death* ; for *those*, says St. Paul, *who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away—crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*"²¹

As members of Christ's Church, let us learn to value our privileges as they ought to be valued ; and we shall value them rightly when we use them faithfully ; not before. If we desire to experience the Church's efficacy, as instrumental to our salvation, let us act up to her teaching, and submit to her godly discipline. Let it be an additional motive to us, to reflect, that by so doing we shall lead others into the same paths of pleasantness and peace ; and make more conspicuous the beauty of the Church's holiness ; and persuade men, when they behold it, to *inquire for the Lord in his Temple* : and what should we more earnestly desire, than that while we ourselves dwell securely under the shadow

²¹ Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

of his wings, we may bring the outcasts into his sanctuary ; and contribute, however imperfectly, to the hastening of that promised time of peace and glory, when *all they that despised the Church of God shall bow themselves down at the soles of her feet*, and shall call her, *The City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel* ; when *violence shall no more be heard in the land, wasting nor destruction in her borders, but she shall call her walls Salvation, and her gates Praise* ?²²

²² Isai. lx. 14, 18.

SERMON II.

ST. MATTHEW XXVIII. 19, 20.

GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM
IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF
THE HOLY GHOST: TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS
WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: AND, LO, I AM WITH
YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.

It would not be easy to point out another passage of Scripture, containing, in the same compass of words, so many important features of Christian truth; the solemn commission given by Jesus Christ to the preachers of his Gospel; the institution of baptism as the initiatory sacrament of his religion; the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity; the necessity of universal obedience to the precepts of Christ on the part of his followers; and the promise of his continual presence with his ministers throughout all succeeding ages of his Church. The first of these features, and the last, the commission

given by our Lord to his Apostles, and the promise of his unfailing presence, are inseparably connected with the questions which I promised to consider in this day's discourse; What form of government was appointed for the Church by our Lord, or his Apostles; and how far is such appointment to be held of perpetual and unchangeable obligation upon every portion, and in all ages of that Church? The first of these questions will form the subject of our inquiry on the present occasion: the second must be reserved for future consideration.

In my last discourse, taking occasion from the words of the sacred historian, *The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved*, I endeavoured to show, that in order to salvation, it was necessary, generally speaking, to be added to the Church by incorporation, or engrafting, through baptism: that the Church itself is a spiritual society, founded by Jesus Christ, its divine and perpetual Head, its frame and constitution being afterwards constructed and settled by his Apostles, acting with his authority, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost: secondly, that its office is, to bring sinners to Christ, by furnishing, to those who are incorporated into it, the means of knowledge and holiness; and that it

is not merely *instrumental* as a teacher, but *sacramental*, as conveying and dispensing grace : thirdly, that it consists of all those who, having been admitted into it by baptism, hold the faith as it is in Jesus, and who use, or do not obstinately refuse and reject, their spiritual privileges ; and that all local Churches, which can trace their apostolical descent, and teach the pure Word of God, and duly administer the ordinances of Christ, are branches, more or less flourishing and fruitful, of the one Holy Universal Church.

It was further observed, that the definition of the Church given in our own Articles, as being “ a congregation,” or rather, “ *the* congregation “ of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God “ is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered, according to Christ’s ordinance, in all “ those things that of necessity are requisite to “ the same,” is of a very general kind ; that it makes the essentials of a Church to be purity of Scripture doctrine, and sacramental completeness ; leaving it still open to inquiry, what the different features of that completeness are : but still it cannot be denied, that all things, of necessity requisite to the due administration of the Sacraments, must be found in a Church

which justly claims to be a branch of the Holy Catholic Church. The inquiry, what those things are, is intimately connected with the questions which I propose to make the subjects of this and a future discourse—What form and proportions did the Apostles give to the great spiritual building, which their Divine Master had commissioned and empowered them to construct, furnishing them with no precise directions, but leaving them to the guidance of the Holy Spirit? And secondly, How far are *their* example and authority, in the constitution of the visible Church, binding upon the whole of that perpetual corporation, of which Jesus Christ himself is the Head? This inquiry is of no light moment. At first sight, perhaps, it may appear to many to be a question, which may be treated as one of merely speculative or historical interest, having no bearing upon their own personal belief or holiness: but indeed it is far otherwise. The subject is one of equal interest to us all, both to the Clergy and the people. Not to dwell upon the importance of the question, whether the former are duly authorized to minister the Sacraments, it follows, that if the one be divinely commissioned to teach, the others are in duty bound to learn; while, on the other hand, if it

be no light thing to contemn, or set at nought, an authority derived from Jesus Christ himself, it is no ordinary responsibility which binds *us* so to exercise that authority, as to give no occasion for contempt or contumacy.

There can be no question amongst Christians, as to the plenary authority of Jesus Christ to make such provision as might seem good to Him for the diffusion and perpetuation of his religion. Yet it may not be superfluous to make one remark on the subject. If the question should be asked, By what authority did Jesus invest his Apostles with the office of baptists and preachers? we find the answer in his own words, immediately preceding those which I have taken for my text: *And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All power (or rather all authority) is given unto me, in heaven and in earth.* The authority vested in Jesus Christ, in his character of Mediator, was not limited to the narrow bounds of his natural life in the flesh. In truth, it was then straitened, as to its exercise, by the very circumstances of the condition and office which He was pleased to take upon himself. He did not display nor put forth the whole of that authority, till He had ascended into heaven, and sat down upon the throne of his mediatorial

kingdom ; in which bright eminence He has ever since exercised complete and supreme dominion over his Church, and will continue to do so, till *the last enemy shall be destroyed, and He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father.*¹ For to this end, says St. Paul, *He both died and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living.*² He had therefore full power and authority, in his office of Mediator, to issue a commission, the operation of which should be co-extensive with the limits of his kingdom, and with the period of its duration. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore :* Go ye then, since I have full authority to send you, and baptize and teach all nations ; and lo, in virtue of the same universal power with which I am invested, *I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*

It must be manifest to the commonest understanding, that this remarkable promise implies a constant and unbroken succession of Gospel ministers, from the time when the Apostles received their first commission, to the final period of the Church's destiny, when it shall have fulfilled the ends of its institution, and *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the*

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 26, 24.

² Rom. xiv. 9.

*waters cover the sea.*³ For since the first preaching of the Gospel, to the then existing nations of the world, was a task which could not be adequately executed by the Apostles themselves, it was therefore necessary that they should appoint others, to be both their assistants, and also their successors in the work; nor, if its execution by themselves had been practicable, would it have answered all the purposes of the office to which they had been ordained. Something more was required for the maintenance and diffusion of Christianity. It was necessary, not merely that the true vine should be planted in the world, but that it should be constantly and carefully tended, and that space should be made for its extension, and the *boughs* thereof trained *unto the sea, and her branches unto the river*,⁴ by the husbandmen, to whom the Lord of the vineyard might entrust its culture with a special and perpetual charge.

We are apt, while living in the free enjoyment of any blessing, to overlook its peculiar advantages, and to forget the inconveniences which would result from the want of it. Accustomed, from our earliest days, to all the benefits which flow from a Church and a Mini-

³ Isa. xi. 9.

⁴ Ps. lxxx. 11.

stry, we do not always remember the special purposes which they are designed to answer; purposes of paramount importance to every one of us in his own person, as well as to the cause of religion in general. Jesus Christ, when He had reconciled us to God by the propitiatory sacrifice of Himself upon the cross, delivered the message of reconciliation into the hands of his chosen followers, and enabled them, by his Holy Spirit, fully to comprehend and faithfully to preach it themselves, and to make provision for a perpetual proclamation of the same gracious message to all nations in all ages, as long as there should remain a mind unenlightened by the truths of the Gospel, or a heart unsubdued to its laws. *All things, exclaims St. Paul, are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*⁵ God has given us the Word of life; and the eternal Son of God has

⁵ 2 Cor. v. 18—20.

appointed Sacraments of grace; but the Word must be continually preached, and the Sacraments rightly administered, by persons specially appointed to the work; or else the one would soon be unread, and the others neglected and disused. To make some provision for a perpetual proclamation of God's truth, and for its enforcement upon the consciences and affections of mankind, and to ensure the continued performance of those acts of acknowledgment, without which the sovereignty of Jehovah would be disregarded, and the Redeemer's mediatorial kingdom forgotten, would have been the dictate of a wise policy, on the part of the Apostles, in the execution of the charge confided to them, even if it had not been the direct suggestion of the Holy Spirit. The institution of Church government, and a continued succession in the Christian ministry, were absolutely necessary to the continuance of the Church itself, and to the effectual discharge of its functions. "*How,*" asks the Apostle, "*shall they call on Him, in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?*"⁶

⁶ Rom. x. 14, 15.

This ascending connexion between the spiritual wants of God's people, and the mission and duties of his ministers, arises from a state of things, which can never cease to exist, till the Church has done its perfect work, and all the kingdoms of the earth are become, in spirit as in name, *the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ*. Ignorance is to be enlightened; pardon is to be proclaimed to repentant sinners, and to be sealed in baptism, and in the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood; the terrors of the Lord are to be denounced against the workers of iniquity; the sleepers are to be awakened; the careless alarmed; the fearful encouraged; the meek instructed and strengthened: and this is a work which cannot be done in a slight and perfunctory manner, at spare moments, stolen from the pressing engagements and occupations of the world, nor by men who have no sufficient credentials to produce of their delegation to perform it; but it must be done statedly, solemnly, authoritatively; as the chief business, the most important work of all; by men specially commissioned, separated from their brethren, divorced from the ordinary business of life, carefully prepared for the due execution of their task, and solemnly invested with authority for its per-

formance. It was therefore to be expected, that this would be provided for by those holy and divinely enlightened men, to whom Jesus Christ had delegated power to do all things necessary for the maintenance and extension of his household, and to whom He had promised the sure guidance of the Spirit, and his own unfailing presence. Had they possessed no such power, had they made no such provision, the consequence must have been disorder and confusion; the dissolution and ruin of the Church, as soon as the Apostles themselves should have been removed from its government.⁷ It would have availed but little, that they had launched the vessel, with its precious charge, into the stormy and troubled ocean of a hostile world, and just steered it out of port, if, when they were summoned to leave it, none had succeeded to the helm, with the authority of *guidance* at least, if not of *command*, and with power to transmit that authority to others.

⁷ "If he think that Christ left the Catholic Church, as the ostrich doth her eggs in the sand, without any care or provision for the governing thereof in future ages, he erreth grossly."—*Archbishop Bramhall*, p. 615. It is expressly asserted by Clement of Rome, a companion of the Apostles, that such provision *was* made by them.—1 Ep. ad Corinth. cxliv.

We may therefore inquire, with an assurance of not being disappointed in the inquiry, what was the course pursued by the Apostles, in order to secure the perpetuity, and purity, and efficiency of the Church of Christ? If we discover, as we readily may, in the inspired records of their acts, and in their own instructions to the Churches, the distinct outlines of that spiritual polity which they constituted for those objects, we have a model and rule of Church government which cannot mislead us: and if we find, upon pursuing our researches through the history of successive ages of the Church, that same rule and model followed, in its essential features, by all Christian communities, however differing upon other points, we have strong reason for concluding that it is the *right* rule and the *true* model; and that it was intended by the holy Apostles to be (what in fact it was, for more than fifteen centuries) the pattern and example, by which all the branches of Christ's universal Church should frame their government and discipline.

Now this is undeniably the case with episcopacy. There is no one doctrine or tenet of the Christian religion in which all Christians were for fifteen centuries so unanimously agreed as in this of episcopacy. At all times, and in all parts of

the world, however Churches might differ in other opinions or practices, all retained their Bishops.⁸ Heretics and schismatics never ventured to raise their standard except under that authority. Where all the witnesses are consentient, it were tedious to adduce their separate testimonies. Let it suffice to bring forward a specimen. Tertullian, whose description of the Church I have already produced, speaks thus, at the conclusion of the second century; and to historical facts like this, the early Fathers are unquestionable witnesses, whatever may be thought of their competency as interpreters of Scripture. "Let any of those heresies," he says, "which pretend to have had their origin in the apostolic age, show us the beginnings of their

⁸ See Jablonsky, quoted by Mr. Perceval, in his *Apology for the Doctrine of the Apostolical Succession*, p. 89.—Archbishop Bramhall's *Works*, p. 595. "Episcopacy is not only ancient, and cemented in our laws, but also was universally received, without any opposition, or so much as a question, throughout the whole Christian world, among all sorts of Christians, of what communion or profession soever they were—and the Observer is challenged to name but one Church, or so much as but one poor village, throughout the whole world, from the days of the Apostles, till the year of Christ 1500, that ever was governed without a Bishop. I except the *Acephali*, or such disordered persons that had no government at all."

“ Churches: let them unrol the order of their
 “ bishops, descending in succession from the
 “ beginning, so that the first Bishop had for his
 “ predecessor, and the source of his authority,
 “ some one of the Apostles, or some apostolic
 “ man who had lived continually with the
 “ Apostles. For in this manner do the apostolic
 “ Churches bring down their descent by their
 “ lists of succession; as the Church of Smyrna
 “ had Polycarp placed over it by John; that of
 “ Rome had Clemens ordained by Peter; and,
 “ in like manner, all the rest produce those,
 “ who, having been constituted bishops by the
 “ Apostles, were the transmitters of the apostolic
 “ seed.”⁹ The testimonies of still earlier Fathers,
 beginning with those who were companions of the
 Apostles themselves, are equally decisive; and
 they are the more weighty, because they are
 incidental; not controversial assertions, (for the
 matter to which they refer was never in debate,)
 but allusions to a well-known and undisputed
 fact. I will adduce but one other witness, the
 celebrated Cyprian, who wrote in the middle of
 the third century. He says that from the first
 charge given to St. Peter, the ordination of
 Bishops was uninterrupted, so that the Church

⁹ De Præscript. Hæret. 32.

was built upon them, and every act of the Church was under their government, as placed over it.¹⁰

It is worth while to observe, how exceedingly different, both in kind and degree, the evidence for the primitive existence and universal prevalence of episcopal government is from that, which the Church of Rome adduces, for the imaginary supremacy of St. Peter, and of his so called successors in that see. The assertors of that claim do not pretend that it is clearly established by contemporary evidence, nor by the evidence of the ages next following that of St. Peter; but admit the defect of such testimony, and say, "It is not to be expected that in the second and third centuries there would be found, even had there been public documents, that clear perception of the designed succession to St. Peter which the ninth and tenth centuries present." We maintain that it *is* to be expected; that there *were* public documents, viz., the writings of the primitive Bishops and Fathers; that the nearer that designed succession was to its beginning, the clearer must have been *their* perception of it; yet that *they* never so much as allude to it, and consequently that

¹⁰ Epist. xxvii. ad Lapsos.

they were wholly ignorant of it; therefore that it did not exist. This argument will be seen in all its force, when placed in contrast with the historical proof of that episcopal government, which the pretended successors of St. Peter, not being able to destroy, have, within the limits of their own power, shorn of its essential and legitimate authority. I do not mean to say that this is the only argument, by which the pretended supremacy of the Roman pontiff may be disproved, for there are clear and pregnant passages in the writings of the early Fathers which directly upset that claim; but the kind of proof, which I have suggested, seems to me to be all the stronger, because it is indirect.

It is then indisputable, that the government of the universal Church, in the age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles, was episcopal; that is to say, abstracting from episcopacy all accidentals, and considering only what is essential; that the government of every province of the Church was vested in one man of eminent sanctity and sufficiency, to have the care of all the Churches within a certain precinct, or diocese, furnished with authority, not arbitrary, but duly regulated by certain laws, to the intent, that all the Churches under him might

be provided with good and able pastors; and that both of pastors and people, conformity with the Church's laws, and performance of their religious duties, might be required, under penalties, of a spiritual kind, not left to discretion, but by law appointed.¹¹

But we have still to prove, that this government was not only universally established in the ages next to the Apostles, but that it was established by the Apostles themselves, or by their authority. And this is no difficult task. That, which was primitive and catholic, must surely have been also apostolic. Had the apostolic constitution of the household of Christ been one of parity, or presbyterian, a government of elders, all having equal authority, it is impossible that in so short a time it should have been universally changed into episcopal, and *that*, tacitly and unobservedly, without notice or reclamation of any kind: and yet so it must have been effected, if it was effected at all; since there is no historical account of any measures taken for that purpose, no canon of a Council, no decree of an emperor, no consent of different Churches. Either episcopal government *was* in conformity with the known mind and will of the holy Apostles, or it

¹¹ Chillingworth, p. 298.

was *not*. If it was, the question is settled. If not, can we possibly believe that the companions and scholars of the Apostles, and those who were *their* companions and scholars, should have conspired to effect so great and total a change in the regimen of the Church, or have tacitly submitted to any attempt on the part of others to enforce it? Were all the watchmen asleep, and all the dogs dumb, when the spirit of ambition crept into the fold and secured to himself the mastery of God's heritage?¹² Were those persons, who contended so fiercely about an outward observance, the time of celebrating Easter, likely to surrender the rights of their presbyterate into the hands of new and unauthorized governors? "When I shall see," says the acute and learned Chillingworth, "all the fables in the "Metamorphosis acted and prove stories; when "I shall see all the democracies and aristocracies "in the world lie down and sleep, and awake "into monarchies; then will I begin to believe, "that presbyterial government, having continued "in the Church *during* the Apostles' times, "should presently *after* (against the Apostles' "doctrine and the will of Christ) be whirled "about like a scene in a mask, and transformed

¹² Chillingworth.

“ into episcopacy. In the mean time, while these
 “ things remain thus incredible, and, in human
 “ reason, impossible, I hope I shall have leave to
 “ conclude thus : Episcopal government is ac-
 “ knowledged to have been universally received
 “ in the Church, presently after the Apostles’
 “ times. Between the Apostles’ times and this
 “ presently after, there was not time enough, nor
 “ possibility of, so great alteration : and therefore
 “ there was no such alteration as is pretended.
 “ And therefore episcopacy, being confessed to
 “ be so ancient and catholic, must be granted
 “ also to be apostolic, which was to be proved.”¹³

— ¹³ “ It is not imaginable that Bishops should come by such
 power as is recorded in ecclesiastical history, and that, all over
 the world, and in a way of ambition, in such humbling times,
 without all manner of opposition for 300 years together, and
 immediately after the Apostles, had it been usurpation, or
 innovation. When and where is innovation without opposi-
 tion ? Would not Elders, so many seeing and knowing men,
 at least some of them, have contended for truth, wherein their
 own liberties and rights were so much concerned ? Aërius’s
 opposing of Bishops, so long after their rise and standing, is
 inconsiderable.”—Mr. Noys, of New England, quoted by Bishop
 Stillingfleet, *Unreasonableness of Separation*, p. 234, who says,
 “ The force of which reasoning will sway more with an impar-
 tial and ingenuous mind, than all the difficulties I ever yet saw
 on the other side.” He himself enlarges upon it in his *Charges*,
 pp. 8, 9. Compare Hooker’s *Preface*, iv. p. 193, ed. Keble. If
 the reader wishes to see the total failure of an attempt to

Let it be observed, that this demonstration would hold good, even if there were no direct evidence in the writings of the New Testament to the apostolical origin of episcopal government; but it is rendered, if possible, doubly sure, when we find St. Paul beseeching Timothy¹⁴ to abide in Ephesus, and to charge the presbyters to teach no other than sound doctrine; to judge of accusations brought against them, and to rebuke them that sinned; to lay hands on those who were to be ordained to the ministry; to commit unto faithful men the things that he had heard from the Apostle, that they might teach them to others also. We could not have a more full or precise description of the essential functions of a Bishop. Again he reminds Titus,¹⁵ that he had left him in Crete, that he should set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city; to rebuke sharply the Judaizing teachers, and to instruct Christians of all ages and classes how to behave themselves; to speak, and exhort,

account for this supposed change from presbyterian to episcopal government, he may consult Neander's Church History of the Three First Centuries, vol. i. p. 193 of Mr. Rose's Translation.

¹⁴ 1 Tim. i. 3; v. 19, 20, 22. 2 Tim. ii. 2.

¹⁵ Tit. i. 5, 13; ii. 1, 15; iii. 10.

and rebuke, not merely in the way of brotherly admonition and counsel, but with all authority ; to reject, or excommunicate, heretics, after the first and second admonition. Here again we have all the chief lineaments of the episcopal office. Lastly, each of the Asiatic Churches, to whom a message of warning was sent in the Apocalyptic vision, was addressed through its Angel ; and that the Angel was the Bishop of that church, and not, as some have pretended, the guardian Angel of the Church, is clear from this, that a message sent *by* a man, must have been sent *to* a man, and not to one of the heavenly intelligences ; and if to a man, then to one who was answerable for the government of the Church. And if each of these seven Churches had its Bishop, we may infer, with certainty, that every other Church had also the same spiritual government.¹⁶

That the authority of ordination to the ministry, and of ordering things necessary to edification, was committed by the Apostles to chosen men of the brethren, and by them conveyed in succession to others ; that these men

¹⁶ See Archbishop Potter on Church Government, chap. iv. and the Rev. John Sinclair's excellent Dissertations on the Church of England, p. 42.

were called, from the time when the Apostles were taken to their reward, Bishops, or Overseers; that they ruled and directed the Church in doctrine and discipline; that no mode of ordination, independent of their authority, was pretended, or attempted, or spoken of, in the primitive Church; that there was no branch of that Church, which was not governed by its own Bishop, taught by its own Presbyters, and served by its own Deacons;—all these points are so prominent and plain in the Church's history, and were for so many centuries unquestioned, that some of the most learned opponents of episcopacy in later times, being also, as was natural, the most candid, have admitted them as facts, and have endeavoured to elude the force of them as well as they could.

It is said, in the Preface to our Ordinal, “It is evident unto all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles’ time there have been three orders of Ministers, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.”

The expression *from* the Apostles’ time seems to intimate, that, while the Apostles lived, they managed the government of the Church themselves, or by temporary deputies, but that, as they withdrew, they did, in some Churches

sooner, in others later, according to their own continuance, the condition of the Churches, and the qualifications of certain persons, commit the care and government of the Churches to such persons, appointed by them thereto. And if this were the case, we may account for the community of names between Bishop and Presbyter for a season, while the Apostles themselves governed the Church ; but afterwards that, which was then part of the apostolical office, became the episcopal, and so has continued to this day.¹⁷

Seeing then that every Church, founded by an Apostle, was under one and the same form of government ; and that all other Churches, derived from them, had also the same form ; and that no other form was tolerated for fifteen centuries ; it seems to me very hazardous to say, with a celebrated writer, “ It cannot be proved that any “ form of Church government was laid down in “ the Christian Church.”¹⁸ That the form was laid down, and very distinctly too, though not in the way of command, is certain ; whether as a model and example, from which no deviation was ever to be permitted, is another question.

¹⁷ Bp. Stillingfleet, *Unreasonableness of Separation*, p. 269.

¹⁸ Paley.

That no express command for that purpose was delivered by our Lord himself we admit : but He commissioned the Apostles to build his Church, and He promised them the guidance of the Holy Spirit ; and they did build according to one certain uniform plan ; and in so important a matter we must conclude them to have had that promised guidance ; and therefore it is surely presumptuous, and hazardous, (to say the least,) to avert our eyes from that pattern, and to fancy ourselves better judges of what is expedient for the Church's good government than the holy Apostles were.

But this touches upon the important question of the divine right of episcopacy, and its universal authority ; which I must reserve for future discussion. I have at least shown it to be primitive, apostolic, catholic : we ourselves have experienced it to be so in its fruits. It was by means of episcopacy, under the blessing of the great Shepherd and Bishop of the Church, that the light of the Gospel dawned upon these islands, and that their barbarous and rude inhabitants were initiated by baptism into all the privileges, and blessings, and hopes of the Christian covenant ; and subjected to all the humanizing and civilizing influences of that truth and grace,

which are dispensed by the Church. Whatever may be said of the abuses of that form of government, or of the temporary neglect of its essential rights and advantages, it is to episcopacy that this country owes the enjoyment not only of its religious liberties, but in a great degree also of its civil freedom, and its social happiness. But what is a far higher praise, it owes to the same channel of the divine goodness the transmission and preservation of Gospel truth, obscured for a time, and eclipsed, but never totally extinguished; and of those liturgical offices, which, while they minister grace and edification to the Church's faithful children now on earth, connect them with the worshippers of her first and purest ages, the fathers and martyrs and confessors, who set forth the beauty of her holiness in their lives, and made fruitful her vineyard with their blood. It is through this channel that the spiritual blessings we enjoy must be transmitted to our children, and, we believe, diffused throughout the world. The command and the promise are to us, as they were to our fathers in Christ, and as they will be to our successors in the line of spiritual descent, *Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of*

*the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*¹⁹

¹⁹ “ Those blessings which the English nation have received from that order (of Bishops), do deserve acknowledgment. By them the Gospel was first planted in the most parts of England : by their doctrine and blood, religion was reformed and restored to us : by the learned writings of them and their successors, it hath been principally defended. Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Hooper, were all Bishops ; Coverdale exercised episcopal jurisdiction. With what indignation do all good Protestants see those blessed men styled now in print by a young novice, *halting and time-serving prelates, and common stales to countenance with their prostituted gravities every politic felch.*— In former distractions of this state, Bishops have been composers and peace-makers, according to their office. England owes many of her Churches, Colleges, Hospitals, and other monuments of piety and charity, to Bishops.”—*Abp. Bramhall*, p. 598.

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Church by baptism, which is one sacrament, and nourished with the spiritual food of Christ's body and blood, in the other sacrament; and that it is therefore a question of vital interest and importance, Who has authority to minister these sacraments, to whom has been transmitted the commission, given by our blessed Lord to his Apostles, and with it the promise of his unending presence. We are now to touch all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

SERMON III.

EPHESIANS IV. 3.

ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE
BOND OF PEACE.

IN the foregoing discourses I have shewn that the Church is a spiritual society founded by Jesus Christ, a mystical body of which He is the Head: that it was built up by the Apostles, acting with his authority, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and that it was so built up according to a certain form and constitution, which were preserved in every branch of the Universal Church for more than fifteen centuries: that every local Church, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered, is a branch of the Church Catholic: that it is generally necessary, in order to salvation, that a man be incorporated into that

Church by baptism, which is *one* sacrament, and nourished with the spiritual food of Christ's body and blood, in the *other* Sacrament; and that it is therefore a question of vital interest and importance, *Who* has authority to minister these sacraments? in other words, to whom has been transmitted the commission, given by our blessed Lord to his Apostles, and with it the promise of his unfailing presence, *Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world?*

It appears, that in the execution of the solemn trust so confided to them, the Apostles constituted a certain form of church-government; and committed to the rulers of the Churches, which they had founded, the power and the duty of ordaining and sending forth labourers into the Lord's vineyard; that *they* transmitted the sacred deposit to *others*; and that from the time of the Apostles, for fifteen hundred years, every branch of the Catholic Church was governed by Bishops, in regular spiritual descent from the Apostles themselves; and that every act of the Church, specially that of ordaining

ministers, was under *their* care and conduct. Our present position therefore is this :

Our blessed Lord gave to his Apostles a general commission to build his Church ; and a promise of the Holy Spirit, to guide them in all things necessary for the due execution of their all important task ; as well as an assurance of his own continued presence with the ministry even to the end of the world. Under that authority, and with the certainty of that guidance, the holy Apostles *did* proceed to construct the Church according to a certain form of polity ; which, as being of apostolical origin and authority, was observed by the Universal Church in all its branches for many ages : so that it was never even thought of, that there could be a *Church* without a *Bishop* ; nor that any persons should claim authority to minister the Word and Sacraments, who had not been ordained by a Bishop. The doctrine of an apostolical succession in the ministry is asserted by the Presbyterian divines, as well as by ourselves : only *they* maintain that the ministerial commission has descended through a succession of *presbyters* ; we, that it has come down to us through a line of *Bishops* : and that *we* have the testimony of all history on our side, I think has been already proved. If

then the episcopal form of church-government be undoubtedly apostolical in its origin and authority; if the right and the duty of preaching the Word of truth and dispensing the Sacraments of grace, have been transmitted through that channel from the holy Apostles themselves, to the ministers of episcopal Churches; it cannot be otherwise than presumptuous and hazardous, for men to turn away their eyes from that pattern, and to separate themselves, or to live in a state of separation, from a Church, which can exhibit these credentials of its spiritual authority: and against which none of those charges can be brought, which alone justify separation: and it ought to be a subject of devout thankfulness to those who belong to such a Church, that at least there can be no question as to the commission of its ministers, and their right to dispense the Sacraments—no question, I mean, as between *them*, and the ministers of any congregations not being episcopal: seeing that whatever reasons may be urged for the validity of *their* mission, apply with still greater force to *ours*.¹

¹ Generally speaking, it is unsafe to argue *a facto ad jus*, so as to conclude peremptorily the one from the other. But we are certainly warranted in saying, that what the Apostles did in the matter of Church government is the best pattern

And this naturally leads us to consider the question, whether the episcopal form of church-government, being undoubtedly apostolical in its origin, and universally prevailing for so many centuries; having possessed in short for fifteen hundred years that characteristic of truth, the being held of divine authority always, everywhere, and by all men, is so obligatory upon Christians, that no congregation of believers, *not* being under this form of government, can be a true branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church? This is a question of some difficulty in itself, and of still greater delicacy, with reference to the line of conduct which it is our duty to pursue towards communities, or individuals, so circumstanced. May that Holy Spirit, who has been promised to the true Church, guide us to the right conclusion in this inquiry, and enable us to discern and hold fast the truth; not with feelings

that we can have, and that it is safer to adhere to than to depart from it. I will add here, what I ought perhaps to have stated in the Sermon itself, that we are not to confound the simple question of the government of the Church by Bishops, with those which concern the extent or limitation of their jurisdiction, or the supremacy of one Bishop over another: the former may have been of divine, or apostolical, institution, the latter of positive order agreed upon amongst Christians.

of pride, nor of strife and contention, but, as the Apostle directs, *with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

But before we proceed with the inquiry, I wish to point out the difference which exists, as to the bearings of this subject, between those persons, who separate themselves from a national Church, which is beyond question in all essentials a branch of the Church Catholic, for instance our own; and those who are members of national Churches, or congregations, not under episcopal government; as, for example, the inhabitants of those countries on the Continent of Europe, where the Reformed religion prevails, as to doctrine; but where the government of the Church is not, as we believe, apostolical. It may be possible, and we believe it to be true, that the former incur the guilt of schism, from which the latter are exempt. The former cannot allege any of the reasons, which alone can justify separation from a particular Church; that it practises idolatry; that it teaches doctrines contrary to the fundamentals of Christian faith, or to the laws of Gospel holiness; that it will not admit them to communion with-

out their doing something forbidden, or professing something untrue ; or lastly, that it is itself in a state of schism from the true Church. None of these accusations can they prove against the national Church of this realm, and therefore they are themselves guilty of schism in separating from it. But the members of any one of the other Reformed, non-episcopal Churches to which I have alluded, do *not* separate themselves from *any* Church ; nor, if they quitted their own Church, is there any episcopal Church in their country to which they could unite themselves ; and therefore, as long as their own Church holds the essentials of doctrine, they may continue therein, and are in no sense schismatics. Their own Church may not be in that perfect communion with the Catholic Church, which would subsist, if there were a unity of discipline as well as of doctrine : it may be the duty of their Church to desire that unity, and to take steps for its restoration ; and it may be the duty of individual members of that Church to promote that happy consummation by all prudent and peaceable methods : but in the mean time, not thoroughly knowing what may be the impediments which block up the way to catholic unity, and of necessity render the progress therein tedious and

difficult, I dare not pronounce that Church to be cut off altogether from the mystical body of Christ ; and I am sure that none of its *members* are chargeable with the guilt of schism, who do not thwart and impede the efforts of the Church itself to assimilate its government and discipline to the apostolical model.

That the apostolical model *ought* to be followed by *every* local Church, I have no manner of doubt ; nor that its adoption is absolutely necessary to the Church's perfectness and efficiency, as a dispenser of truth and grace. But if I find entire branches of the great Christian family living under a different form of government, deprived of the advantages of episcopacy, in the first instance not by their own fault, but through the tyranny and obstinacy of the Church of Rome refusing them those advantages ; being also in that state of dependence upon the secular power, which was occasioned by the want of a legitimate spiritual government, and from which, by their own mere motion, it is difficult, if not impossible, to extricate themselves,—I cannot consent to speak of those communities as being altogether aliens from the Church of Christ, nor to deal with them as though they were entirely destitute of the privileges which belong to it.

I pity and lament their want of some of those privileges ; and I pray that *they* too may *feel* that want, and that the great Head of the Church may bring them into the full perception and enjoyment of those privileges ; but I dare not *think* of them, still less *speak* of them, as heretics, or schismatics ; I dare not pronounce them, as such, excommunicate ; and I tremble at the arrogance and uncharitableness, which presume to deal out anathemas against those, who deny no one fundamental point of faith, but who are defective, (it may be questioned whether by their own fault) in the form of their government, and, as connected therewith, in the clear and indisputable succession of their ministry.

Let us consider, for a moment, the real state of the case, with regard to the foreign Reformed Churches, with the calmness and candour of men, who, being assured of our own safety, are desirous of seeing what degrees of security are enjoyed by those who are, or ought to be, members of the same family with ourselves ; and how far it may be necessary, or desirable for us to use our best endeavours to place *them* in the same firm and unassailable position which the good providence of God has permitted *us* to occupy

It is certain that Luther, and his companions, did not *separate themselves* from the episcopal Church then existing in Germany; but that they were forcibly excommunicated and driven out by the Roman pontiff, and his servants,² the German prelates. They appealed again and again to a General Council, and declared their willingness to retract any errors which they should be proved to have taught. Instead of acceding to this reasonable request, the Emperor endeavoured to subdue the Protestants by force of arms; and when at last a so-called General Council was assembled at Trent, their opinions, in so far as they differed from those of the Romish divines, were condemned without a hearing. All along they professed their desire to retain episcopal government;³ but being in the first instance forcibly deprived of it, and driven upon a provisional system of Church government, the supreme power of the Church being, as it were, put into commission, it is no wonder if, by degrees, they lost their respect for that which had caused them so much suffering;

² See Palmer on the Church, i. p. 366.

³ "Sævitia episcoporum in causa est, quare alicubi dissolvitur illa canonica politia, quam magnopere cupiebamus conservare." Apolog. Confess. August. ad Art. 4.

and also their desire to recover it. The case was nearly the same, at first, with Calvin and his friends;⁴ although with *them* the desire of retaining episcopacy lasted but a short time; as was natural, when that eminent reformer found himself possessed of authority, as great for all practical purposes, as that, not only of Bishop, but of Pope.

For these reasons it is admitted, by those of our divines who take the highest ground in asserting the claims of episcopacy, that the earlier Lutherans and Calvinists were not heretics nor schismatics. If so, I would desire to be told, at what period of time their descendants became so? I know very well, that it is not difficult to trace, in the history of their Churches, the gradual declension of orthodoxy; and to point out the individual writers, who became, in succession, more and more heretical in their teaching, till they were plunged into that dismal

⁴ "Nobis si contribuant Hierarchiam in qua emineant episcopi, ut Christo subesse non recusent, ut ab illo tanquam ab uno capite pendeant, et ad ipsum referantur, in qua si fraternam caritatem inter se colant, et non alio modo quam ejus veritate colligati, tum vero nullo non anathemate dignos fatemur, si qui erunt, qui eam non reverenter et summa cum obedientiâ observent." Calvin. tom. vii. p. 69, quoted in Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, p. 410.

gulf of rationalism, below which there is hardly a lower depth to reach. And I know, too, that this was a consequence, perhaps a punishment, of the imperfect system of church-government which was suffered to remain so long after the first necessity had passed away. But I will not venture to say, that because this, or that generation of men did not re-establish that perfect community with the Catholic Church in ecclesiastical discipline, which had been forcibly interrupted, not by *their* fault; therefore, they, and those who came after them, and who were probably less able to take that step, are to be considered as schismatical; it being admitted, that their forefathers, who lived under the same form of Church government, were not so. As Churches, they are undoubtedly defective; wanting some of those privileges and securities which are enjoyed, in all their completeness, by those Churches which are, and always have been, constituted according to the apostolic model: but to their individual members I dare not deny a participation in all things required of necessity to salvation.

It appears to me, that in this manner it is by no means difficult to reconcile *truth* with *charity*; to hold a firm conviction of the apostolical origin

and constitution of our own Church, with a persuasion, or at least a charitable hope, that those national Churches, which having once unavoidably, and unwillingly, lost the perfectness of ecclesiastical order, have not yet regained it, possibly not having been able to do so, are yet within the pale of Christ's Church, so far at least as the being so is necessary to the final salvation of their individual members. "Although I see," says Hooker, "that certain Reformed Churches, "have not that which best agreeth with the "sacred Scripture, I mean the government that "is by bishops—this their defect and imperfection I had rather lament in such a case "than exagitate, considering that men oftentimes, without any fault of their own, may be "driven to want that kind of polity or regimen "which is best, and to content themselves with "that which either the irremediable error of "former times, or the necessity of the present, "has cast upon them."⁵ The necessity of which he speaks, whether it exist or not with respect to entire Churches, or communities, may exist with respect to all the members of such Churches who bear no rule therein, nor have power to change

⁵ Eccl. Pol. iii. 11.

their form of government. The more exclusive view of the subject, which peremptorily shuts out all such Christian communities from the true Church, and treats them as heretical and schismatical, I consider to be more in accordance with the intolerant arrogance which breathes in the decrees of the Council of Trent, than with the wise and pious caution that pervaded the Synod of our own Church which framed her Articles of Faith. It is said, indeed, that those holy and prudent men were purposely wary and reserved in their definitions of church-government, for fear of giving offence to the foreign Reformed Churches : I believe their caution to have proceeded rather from a religious fear of deciding peremptorily that which is not peremptorily decided in the Word of God ; and of excluding, from any of the benefits of the Christian economy, those who have not been formally excluded therefrom by Jesus Christ and his Apostles. Almighty God may do what He will with his own. We know what He has given *us* ; and *how* He gives it ; let us value it and be thankful for it as we ought. But if it please Him to give the same benefit to others in a somewhat different method, shall we deny *them* the right of receiving it, or question *his*

power to give it? *Is our eye evil, because his is good?*⁶

I say that I believe these to have been the feelings of those Fathers of our Church who framed our Articles of Faith; and I believe it, not only because the supposition is consistent with the tenour of their own writings, but because it is the doctrine of those amongst their successors, who were most conversant with all the questions of church-government, and most strenuous in upholding that of the Church of England. Hear, for instance, him, who was perhaps the most learned, as he was certainly not the least holy, of them all, Bishop Andrews: "Though our government," he says, "be of
"divine right, it follows not, either that there is
"no salvation, or that a Church cannot stand,

⁶ Our Reformers, in the Book of Consecration, approved in the 36th Article, insist strongly upon the necessity of episcopal ordination, a point which, as Bishop Sanderson says, "has been constantly and uniformly maintained by our best writers, and by all the sober, orderly, and orthodox sons of the Church:" but they do not presume to say that it is impossible, under any circumstances, for a Church to exist without it. We may, however, set their formal approval of the Consecration Book against the private opinions of Archbishop Cranmer, in his Answers to the Ninth Question concerning Church Government.

“ without it. He must needs be stone-blind,
 “ that sees not Churches standing without it;
 “ he must needs be made of iron, and hard-
 “ hearted, that denies them salvation.” — “ Some-
 “ what may be wanting, that is of divine right
 “ (at least in the external government) and yet
 “ salvation may be had.” “ To this determina-
 “ tion,” says Archbishop Bramhall, quoting the
 words of Bishop Andrews, “ episcopal divines
 “ will readily subscribe. — This mistake pro-
 “ ceedeth from not distinguishing between the
 “ true nature and essence of a Church, which
 “ we do readily grant them, and the integrity or
 “ perfection of a Church, which we cannot grant
 “ them, without swerving from the judgment of
 “ the Catholic Church.”⁷ “ This,” concludes
 Bishop Andrews, “ is not to damn anything,
 “ to prefer a better thing before it; this is not
 “ to damn *your* Church, to recall it to another
 “ form, that all antiquity was better pleased
 “ with, *i. e.* to ours; and this, when God shall
 “ grant the opportunity, and your estate may
 “ bear it.”⁸ Surely this language, which was
 held two hundred years ago, by that wise, and
 learned, and pious Bishop of our Church, by

⁷ Works, p. 614. See also p. 164.

⁸ Second Answer to P. Du Moulin.

that strenuous and successful advocate of her apostolicity, when writing to a minister of the Reformed Churches in France, is precisely the language which it becomes *us* to hold at the present moment, towards those of the Continental Churches which are beginning to feel their worldly thralldom, and the want of some essential element of order and orthodoxy, and to *ask for the old paths*. Let us say to them, We do not condemn you, as obstinately refusing the means of salvation ; we do not pronounce you to be hopelessly in the wrong ; but we show you *a more excellent way* ; we recall you to the teaching and example of all antiquity ; and we entreat you to return thereto, “when God shall grant you the opportunity, and your estate may bear it.” Which, think you, is the most likely to win over those Churches to the sisterhood of our own, and to the fulness of communion with the apostolic Church ; such language as this, or the interdicts and anathemas of hasty and ill-judging men, as little in accordance with the opinions of the wisest and most learned Fathers of our Church, and with the spirit of its Articles, as with Christian charity and prudence ?

But I have not yet done with the testimony of Bishop Andrews :—“ To *want* somewhat,” he

says, "that is of divine right, is not to tread
 "underfoot the divine right. Let but ob-
 "stinacy and perverseness be wanting, it will
 "be no heresy; and if it be heresy (being
 "about a point of discipline), it will not be
 "amongst those which St. Peter calls *damnable*
 "*heresies*."⁹

I will add the judgment of Francis Mason, the
 learned defender of our ordinations, and of those
 of the foreign Reformed Churches. "First,"
 he says, "if by *jure divino* you mean that which
 "is according to Scripture, then the pre-emi-
 "nence of Bishops is *jure divino*; for it hath
 "been already proved to be according to Scrip-
 "ture: secondly, if by *jure divino* you mean the
 "ordinance of God, in this sense also it may be
 "said to be *jure divino*; for it is an ordinance of
 "the Apostles, whereunto they were directed by
 "God's Spirit, even the Spirit of prophecy; and,
 "consequently, the ordinance of God. But if
 "by *jure divino* you understand a law and com-
 "mandment of God, binding all Christian
 "Churches universally, perpetually, unchange-
 "ably; and with such absolute necessity that
 "no other form or regimen may in any case
 "be admitted; in this sense neither may we

⁹ Third Answer to P. Du Moulin.

“grant it, nor yet can you prove it to be
“*jure divino*.”¹⁰

Archbishop Bramhall, whose authority is
appealed to as decisive on questions of this
nature, maintains, that the essential distinctions

¹⁰ Certain brief Treatises. Oxford, 1641. The admission
which is made by the ablest champions of episcopacy,
Hooker, Dr. Field, Bishops Downam, Bilson, Davenant,
Andrews, and others, that ordination by Presbyters only, in
case of necessity, is valid, proves that the divine right of
episcopacy was understood by them in a qualified sense.
Conformable to their judgment has been the practice of the
Church of England. I am indebted to the Rev. T. Hartwell
Horne for the following extract from Archbishop Spottis-
woode's History of the Church of Scotland, pp. 496, 514 ;
London, 1655 ; folio. “After the Scottish Parliament, in
1606, had passed the act for ‘the restitution of the estate of
Bishops,’ three clergymen who had been designated to Scottish
sees, in 1610 came to London, when ‘the 21st of October was
appointed to be the time, and the chapel of London-House
the place of consecration.’ A question in the mean time
was moved by Dr. Andrewes, Bishop of Ely, touching the
consecration of the Scottish Bishops, who, as he said, must
first be ordained presbyters, as having received no ordination
from a Bishop.’ The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Ban-
croft, who was by, maintained ‘that thereof there was no
necessity, seeing where Bishops could not be had, the ordina-
tion given by presbyters must be esteemed lawful ; otherwise
it might be doubted if there were any lawful vocation in most
of the Reformed Churches.’ This was applauded to by the
other Bishops : Ely acquiesced ; and at the day and in the
place appointed, the three Scottish Bishops were con-
secrated.”

of the Church are, an entire profession of saving truth, a right use of the Word and Sacraments, and an union under lawful pastors. "But yet," he says, "this essentiality must not be pressed too far, for fear lest we draw out blood in the place of milk.—These three *essentials* do constitute both the *essence* and the *perfection* of a Church. Being *perfect* they consummate the integrity of a Church; being *imperfect* they do yet contribute a *being* to a Church. It doth not follow that, because faith is essential, therefore every point of true faith is essential; or because discipline is essential, therefore every *part* of right discipline is essential; or because the Sacraments are essential, therefore every lawful rite is essential. Many things may be lawful, many things may be laudable, yea many things may be necessary *necessitate præcepti*, commanded by God, of divine institution, that are not essential, nor necessary *necessitate medii*. The want of them may be a great *defect*; it may be a great *sin*, and yet, if it proceed from invincible necessity, or invincible ignorance, it doth not absolutely exclude from heaven. The essences of things are unalterable; and therefore the lowest degree of saving faith, of ecclesiastical discipline, of sacramental communion that ever was in the

“ Catholic Church, is sufficient to preserve the
 “ true being of a Church.”¹¹ And in another
 passage still more directly to the point, having
 asked, “ Where we are not sure that there is
 “ right ordination, what assurance have we that
 “ there is a Church ?” he proceeds, “ I write not
 “ this to prejudge our neighbour Churches :
 “ I dare not limit the extraordinary operation
 “ of God’s Spirit, where ordinary means are
 “ wanting, without default of the persons : He
 “ gave his people manna for food whilst they
 “ were in the wilderness. Necessity is a strong
 “ plea : many Protestant Churches lived under
 “ Kings and Bishops of another communion ;
 “ others had particular reasons, why they could
 “ not continue, or introduce Bishops : but it
 “ is not so with us. It was as wisely as charitably
 “ said of St. Cyprian, *If any of my predecessors*
 “ *through ignorance or simplicity have not holden*
 “ *that which our Lord hath taught, the mercy of the*
 “ *Lord might pardon them.* So if any Churches
 “ through new necessity, or ignorance, or new-
 “ fangledness, or covetousness, or practice of
 “ some persons, have swerved from the aposto-
 “ lical rule, or primitive institution, the Lord
 “ may pardon them, or supply the defect of
 “ man ; but *we* must not therefore presume. It

¹¹ P. 144. See also p. 164.

“ is charity to think well of our neighbours, and
 “ good divinity to look well to ourselves.”—“ For
 “ my part, I am apt to believe, that God looks
 “ upon his people in mercy, with all their preju-
 “ dices, and that there is a great latitude left to
 “ particular Churches, in the constitution of
 “ their ecclesiastical regimen, according to the
 “ exigence of time, and place, and persons, so as
 “ order, and his own institution be observed.”¹²

¹² P. 597. The Archbishop's practice corresponded with his recorded sentiments. His biographer, Dr. Vesey, Bishop of Limerick, relates, that when a question arose, on his visitation of the diocese of Armagh, as to the titles of some incumbents who had received only presbyterian ordination, the Archbishop said, “ I dispute not the value of your ordination, nor those acts you have exercised by virtue of it, what you are, or might do here, when there was no law, or in other Churches abroad : but we are now to consider ourselves as a national Church limited by law, which among other things takes chief care to prescribe about ordination : and I do not know how you could recover the means of the Church, if any should refuse to pay you your tithes, if you are not ordained as the law of this Church requireth ; and I am desirous that she may have your labours, and you such portions of her revenue, as shall be allotted to you in a legal and assured way.” The Bishop of Limerick subjoins “ the very words which his Grace caused to be inserted into the letters of one Mr. Edward Parkinson, whom he ordained at that time :” viz. “ *Non annihilantes priores Ordines (si quos habuit), nec validitatem aut invaliditatem eorundem determinantes, multo minus omnes ordines sacros Ecclesiarum Forinsecarum condemnantes, quos proprii judicii relinquimus, sed solummodo supplentes quicquid prius*

I would once more observe, that these considerations bear only upon the case of the Reformed Churches of other countries; and that they have no force, with reference to seceders from our own national Church, who cannot urge any of the pleas, upon which the former may claim to be exempt from a sentence of excommunication from the Catholic Church, as wanting the government by Bishops. When people of the same community separate them-

defuit per canones Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ requisitum, et providentes paci ecclesiæ, ut schismatis tollatur occasio, et conscientiiis fidelium, ne ullo modo dubitent de ejus ordinatione, aut actus suos presbyteriales tanquam invalidos aversentur."—

Life of Primate Bramhall, prefixed to the Dublin edition of his Works, printed in 1687 : signature O. folio 1. See Bishop Mant's History of the Church of Ireland, p. 623. To bring down the chain of witnesses to a later period, let us hear the words of Dean Sherlock. "I do allow Episcopacy to be an apostolic institution and the truly ancient and catholic government of the Church—but I prove that in case of necessity, when Bishops cannot be had, a Church may be a truly Catholic Church, and such as we may and ought to communicate with, without Bishops, in vindication of some foreign Reformed Churches who have none; and therefore I do not make Episcopacy so absolutely necessary to catholic communion, as to unchurch all Churches which have it not." "The Church of England does not deny, but that in case of necessity the ordination of Presbyters may be valid."—See Bishop Gibson's Preservative, Vol. iii. p. 410, quoted by Mr. Goode, in his learned and careful work, The Divine Rule of Faith and Practice, Vol. ii. p. 108.

selves from the Church of that community, not differing from it in fundamentals, no such pleas can be advanced; they may not be chargeable with *heresy*, but I do not understand how they can escape the guilt of *schism*. Against *them* we may justly urge the divine right of episcopacy, as that right has now been explained; and we are not to be induced, by mistaken notions of charity, to forbear from asserting it, in the way of argument and admonition. If our Church be a true branch of the Church Catholic as we have proved it to be, it is impossible that separation from it should not be schismatical; those who leave, or keep aloof from its communion, do not *endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. It is no justification of such conduct, that many of those who practise it are men of a holy life and conversation; nor does it follow that their forms of Church government are lawful, because the labours of their ministers or teachers may have been productive of some good.¹³ As long as the fundamental truths of the Gospel are preached, even though it be of *contention*, they will not be wholly void of effect. But whatever good may be accomplished by

¹³ See Mr. W. Hey on the Authority of a Threefold Ministry, reprinted by Dr. Wordsworth in his very useful Christian Institutes, Vol. iii. p. 191.

such means, is in a great degree counterbalanced by the certain evils of schism; and might be accomplished more surely, and effectually, and lastingly, by a faithful use of those ordinances, which are formally of *apostolic*, and virtually of *divine* institution. No man can justify his voluntary separation from the national Church, but upon the ground that she requires of him the profession of some article of faith at variance with the fundamental truths of the Gospel, or the performance of some act of worship forbidden, either expressly or implicitly, by the Word of God. This principle was acknowledged, and for some time acted upon, by the English Puritans, who disapproved of certain expressions, and forms, and practices, and rules, insisted upon by the Church of England, and yet did not feel themselves at liberty to leave her communion. But now, for slighter reasons, or for none at all, many are either guilty of schism themselves, or countenance and justify it in others.

Yet although none of the excuses, which have been urged for the want of apostolical government in some national Churches, can be pleaded in justification of those who separate from our own episcopal Church, I would not pronounce, even upon *them*, the sentence of absolute exclu-

sion from the Church of Christ, nor declare that they are beyond the pale of salvation. I think them in a state of great uncertainty and hazard ; I am sure that they want many spiritual privileges and advantages which I am thankful for possessing ; but I must leave the work of judgment to Him, who readeth the hearts of men ; and *knoweth them that are his* ; and I will content myself with praying for them, and labouring to convince them of the duty and the rewards of unity. I remember that it was to a Samaritan leper, who was an alien from the elder Church of God, one of an heretical community, that our blessed Saviour said, *Thy faith hath made thee whole.*¹⁴

But these considerations open to *us*, my brethren, a field of very serious self-inquiry. If to maintain the unity of Christ's Holy Catholic Church be, as undoubtedly it is, the duty of all its members, they are bound to use those means which are most likely to promote the attainment of that end ; and it is manifest, that one of the most promising methods of recommending the Church to those who are living in separation from it, is, to exemplify the efficacy of its doctrines and ordinances in the devout, and self-denying, and charitable tenour of our own lives

¹⁴ Luke xvii. 19.

and conversations. This of necessity implies the diligent and conscientious use of our privileges, as members of the Church ; an obedient hearkening to her doctrine, a punctual attendance upon her ordinances, a respectful observance of her rules. It is the inconsistency of Churchmen in this respect, their imperfect and negligent compliance with the instructions and commands of their spiritual mother, which have led so many lightly to esteem that relationship, and smoothed the way to dissent.

But on the other hand, while we urge upon you the duty of a conformity, both of mind and action, to the Catholic Church of Christ, we must caution you against the fatal error of substituting the means for the end, and of reposing securely upon the fact of your church-membership, without a constant and anxious reference to the object of the Church's institution, and your own personal interest therein, the glorification of God through Jesus Christ, first by the sanctification, then by the salvation of sinners, yourselves amongst the rest.

You have been admitted into the Church, in order that you may be brought to Him who *hath purchased it with his own blood*,¹⁵ and joined to Him as its Head in spiritual communion ; that

¹⁵ Acts xx. 28.

by the use of all the appointed means *Christ may be formed in you*;¹⁶ and that as by His grace you have been *made*, as St. Peter says, *partakers of the divine nature*, you may give proof of that spiritual transformation, by showing that you have *escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*.¹⁷ In thankfully contemplating the spiritual privileges of the Church, as the mystical body of Christ, be careful not to lose sight of your own individual relation to Him, and of your individual responsibility. *They are not all Israel which are of Israel*.¹⁸—*He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God*.¹⁹

Exemplary devotion, habitual self-denial, unfeigned humility, active beneficence, are not indeed indubitable *proofs* of catholicity, but they are its *probable fruits*, and its *indispensable evidences*; and the defect of any one of them will not be atoned for by the strictest observance of the Church's discipline: *for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncir-*

¹⁶ Gal. iv. 19.

¹⁷ 2 Pet. i. 4.

¹⁸ Rom. ix. 6.

¹⁹ Rom. ii. 28, 29.

*cumcision, but a new creature ; and faith which worketh by love.*²⁰

Finally therefore, brethren, *I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love : endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling ; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

COLLECT FOR ST. SIMON AND ST. JUDE, APOSTLES.

O Almighty God, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone ; Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple, acceptable unto thee ; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

²⁰ Gal. v. 6 ; vi. 15.

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